

Ithkuil Description of Marcel Duchamp's  
 "Nude Descending a Staircase, No. 2"  
 Two Alternate Versions  
*by John Quijada*

**Alternate Version 1:**

Qø'wemon ǵelg ûpnui'wešča omm šalı́ wīšpaiṭítandeldant̚\.

Compared to the original version of the translation I presented at the conference in Elista, this version has the following differences and additional elements of meaning:

- The first stem *qöm* 'woman' now carries an extra suffix *-on* signifying that she functions in the semantic role of a stimulus for an affective experience, i.e., that she is meant to be an object to be seen and thought about by an audience.
- The third word *ûpnui'wešča* has now been declined into the REPRESENTATIVE essence to indicate that the word refers to an imaginary representation of a staircase.
- The fourth word *omm* now indicates ALLEGATIVE sanction, indicating that the statement as a whole is a subjective allegation to be considered and evaluated by the listener/audience. Additionally, the SEQUENTIAL suffix *-ēř* which previously appeared on this word has been removed, since its meaning is now carried by the new CRV/5 suffix in the verb below.
- The two-part verb form *šalı́ wīšpaiṭítandeldant̚\* is completely different from the original translation. The stem is now *päṭ* 'descend' and carries many suffixes and morphological permutations focused on describing the shape and form of the individual steps of the imaginary woman's descent. The literal translation of the words would be: '...linearly descends via spatio-temporally well-integrated abulatory steps in a cyclic process with disjointed transitions between the steps, covering a volume of space, the whole comprising a synergistic gestalt for aesthetic, psychological, and emotional consideration.'

The interlinear analysis of the sentence is as follows:

STEMS:

<i>qöm</i>	'woman'	< root: <b>Q-M</b> 'PERSON'
<i>leg</i>	'article of clothing as bodily coverage'	< root: <b>L-G</b> 'CLOTHING'
<i>puč</i>	'stair'	< root: <b>P-Č</b> '(LARGE) IMPLEMENT FOR COUNTERING GRAVITY'
<i>päṭ</i>	'descend/descent'	< root: <b>P-T</b> 'VERTICAL TRANSLATIVE MOTION'

<b>qø'wemon</b> <i>qöm</i> - <span>RPV</span> - <span>IND</span> - <span>AGC/8</span>	“imaginary representation of a woman as self-initiator of action who is also the stimulus for an affective experience (i.e., as a sight to be seen/considered by an audience)”
<b>ǰelg</b> <span>AGG</span> - <i>leg</i> - <span>ABE</span>	“without a set of clothing as bodily coverage”, i.e., “nude”
<b>ûpnui'wešča</b> <span>ASO</span> - <span>PRX</span> - <i>puč</i> - <span>RPV</span> - <span>COH</span> - <span>PLT</span>	“along a portion of an imaginary representation of a staircase”
<b>omm</b> <span>PRG</span> - <span>ITR</span> - <span>ALG</span>	[PROGRESSIVE] “being in the midst of, ...-ing’ [ITERATIVE] “in a repetitive series of single manifestations’, i.e., ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● [ALLEGATIVE] = (statement is a subjective evaluation/allegation)
<b>šalí</b> <span>§ DERIVATION</span> - <span>ISR</span> <b>wišpaiṭitandeldant\</b> <span>STA</span> - <span>COA</span> - <span>PRX</span> - <span>COH</span> - <i>pät</i> - <span>RPV</span> - <span>MEC/1</span> - <span>TRA/2</span> - <span>CRV/5</span> - <span>A</span> - <span>AMC</span>	“covers a volume of space by linearly descending in a series of tightly-integrated cyclic but disjointed ambulatory movements, all of which together form a timeless, emergent whole to be considered intellectually, emotionally and aesthetically”

#### KEY TO ABBREVIATIONS

- RPV REPRESENTATIVE: indicates an imaginary representation of a noun or verb
- IND INDUCIVE: a case indicating the noun is the undergoer of a self-initiated action
- AGC/8 AGENTIVE/8<sup>TH</sup> DEGREE: indicates the stimulus of an affective experience (i.e., an object the sight or presence of which causes another to undergo an unwilling state/experience)
- AGG AGGREGATIVE: indicates a set of related but non-identical items which function together
- ABE ABESSIVE: a case indicating the absence of the noun, i.e., ‘without X’ or ‘X-less’
- ASO ASSOCIATIVE: indicates a set that serves a specific purposeful function
- PRX PROXIMAL: indicates the continuity of a set without any focus on its beginning, end or edges
- COH COHERENT: indicates a set of identical segmented items which together form a new gestalt entity
- PLT PROLATIVE: case indicating a noun as an orientational course or pathway, i.e., “along X”
- PRG PROGRESSIVE: verbal aspect indicating being in the midst of an act/event/situation, e.g., “...-ing”
- ITR ITERATIVE: verbal aspect indicating a repetitive series of point-like occurrences
- ALG ALLEGATIVE: indicates the statement is a subjective evaluation or refutable allegation
- § DERIVATION operates in conjunction with STA below to convey a covert verb “*occupy space / cover a volume of space*”
- ISR INSTRUMENTATIVE: indicates the following verb conveys the means/method of the covert verb

- STA** STATIVE: operates with **§ DERIVATION** above to convey a conflated (covert) verb “occupy space / cover a volume of space”
- COA** COALESCENT: indicates the word represents an emergent gestalt-like concept representing higher-order simplicity from lower-order complexity
- MEC/1** MEANS/1<sup>ST</sup> DEGREE: “by means of the body’s natural means/method of doing so” (in this case in reference to descent, thus indicating “ambulation, taking a step”)
- SEP/5** SEPARABILITY/5<sup>TH</sup> DEGREE: indicates a tightly integrated set of components
- TRA/2** TRANSITION/2<sup>ND</sup> DEGREE: indicates disjointed, non-continuous breaks or shifts between one state/shape/form and the next
- CRV/5** CYCLE ON LINEAR VECTOR/5<sup>TH</sup> DEGREE: indicates cyclic sequential motion along a linear vector, e.g., like train or bicycle wheels or legs walking/crawling, etc.
- A** ABSTRACT: indicates an act/event/situation constitutes a timeless (i.e., tenseless) abstraction
- AMG** AMALGAMATIVE: indicates an act/event situation is to be considered not merely as a description of the external world but is to be considered subjectively/psychologically in terms of its social, emotional, and synergistic implications

LITERAL TRANSLATION:

*“An alleged representation of an imaginary nude woman in the midst of what is represented as covering a volume of space by descending along an imaginary staircase in a step-by-step series of tightly-integrated cyclic but disjointed ambulatory movements, forming a timeless, emergent whole to be considered intellectually, emotionally and aesthetically.”*

**Alternate Version 2:**

Řua pařř wâpaïțôlnit\ ixnä'wëmandeld qîürm ðelg ûpnui'weřça.

This version is almost completely different from the original version of the translation presented at the conference in Elista. The interlinear analysis of the sentence is as follows:

STEMS:

<b>päř</b>	'descend/descent'	< root: <b>P-T</b> 'VERTICAL TRANSLATIVE MOTION'
<b>xän</b>	'image'	< root: <b>X-N</b> 'VISION/SIGHT'
<b>qöm</b>	'woman'	< root: <b>Q-M</b> 'PERSON'
<b>leg</b>	'article of clothing as bodily coverage'	< root: <b>L-G</b> 'CLOTHING'
<b>puč</b>	'stair'	< root: <b>P-Č</b> '(LARGE) IMPLEMENT FOR COUNTERING GRAVITY'

<b>řua</b> <b>IP</b> - <b>AFF</b>	impersonal referent (i.e., “one”, French “on”, German “man”) + the AFFECTIVE case indicating that the impersonal referent undergoes an experiential state
<b>pařř</b> <b>p</b> DERIVATION- <b>RSL</b> <b>wâpaïřôlnit</b> <b>STA</b> - <b>PRX</b> - <i>pät</i> - <b>RPV</b> - <b>SPR/8</b> - <b>MEC/1</b>	“mentally envisions the representation of a path/wake of descending motion created by bodily/ambulatory movement”
<b>ixnä'wëmandeld\</b> <b>COA</b> - <b>COH</b> - <i>xän</i> - <b>INS</b> - <b>SEP/5</b> - <b>TRA/2</b> - <b>AMG</b>	“by means of a tightly integrated set of sequential but disjointed images, which together form a timeless, emergent whole to be considered intellectually, emotionally and aesthetically”
<b>qîürm</b> <i>qöm</i> - <b>RPV</b> - <b>INH</b>	“of an imaginary representation of a woman”
<b>řelg</b> <b>AGG</b> - <i>leg</i> - <b>ABE</b>	“without a set of clothing as bodily coverage”, i.e., “nude”
<b>ûpnui'wešča</b> <b>ASO</b> - <b>PRX</b> - <i>puč</i> - <b>RPV</b> - <b>COH</b> - <b>PLT</b>	“along a portion of an imaginary representation of a staircase”

#### KEY TO ABBREVIATIONS

- IP** IMPERSONAL: impersonal referent (equivalent to impersonal pronouns such as English “one”, French “on”, German “man”)
- AFF** AFFECTIVE: case indicating the undergoer of an unwilling experiential/mental state
- p** DERIVATION operates in conjunction with **STA** below to convey a covert verb “*mentally envision*”
- RSL** RESULTATIVE: indicates that the verb specifies the concurrent result of the conflated (covert) verb, i.e., a state or event which occurs in conjunction with the covert sense but is also caused by it
- STA** STATIVE: operates with **p** DERIVATION above to convey a conflated (covert) verb “*mentally envision*”
- PRX** PROXIMAL: indicates the continuity of a set without any focus on its beginning, end or edges
- RPV** REPRESENTATIVE: indicates an imaginary representation of a noun or verb
- SPR/8** SPREAD/8<sup>TH</sup> DEGREE: indicates a 3-dimensional wake or trail of an entity’s passage
- MEC/1** MEANS/1<sup>ST</sup> DEGREE: “by means of the body’s natural means/method of doing so” (in this case in reference to descent, thus indicating “ambulation, taking a step”)
- COA** COALESCENT: indicates the word represents an emergent gestalt-like concept representing higher-order simplicity from lower-order complexity
- COH** COHERENT: indicates a set of identical segmented items which together form a new gestalt entity

- INS** INSTRUMENTIVE: a case indicating a noun as the means, method, or tool for accomplishing something
- SEP/5** SEPARABILITY/5<sup>TH</sup> DEGREE: indicates a tightly integrated set of components
- TRA/2** TRANSITION/2<sup>ND</sup> DEGREE: indicates disjointed, non-continuous breaks or shifts between one state/shape/form and the next
- AMG** AMALGAMATIVE: indicates an act/event situation is to be considered not merely as a description of the external world but is to be considered subjectively/psychologically in terms of its social, emotional, and synergistic implications
- INH** INHERENT: a case identifying a noun as characterizing or defining the identity or intrinsic nature of another in a subjective, contextual, metaphorical, or symbolic manner
- AGG** AGGREGATIVE: indicates a set of related but non-identical items which function together
- ABE** ABESSIVE: a case indicating the absence of the noun, i.e., 'without X' or 'X-less'
- ASO** ASSOCIATIVE: indicates a set that serves a specific purposeful function
- PLT** PROLATIVE: case indicating a noun as an orientational course or pathway, i.e., "along X"

LITERAL TRANSLATION:

*"One mentally envisions the representation of the wake/trail of descending bodily ambulatory motion by means of a sequential set of tightly integrated but disjointed images of an imaginary female nude along a portion of a staircase, all of which forms a timeless, emergent whole to be considered intellectually, emotionally and aesthetically."*